

day about how this may be a boon to the terrorists. We need to improve our response to an emergency so this does not happen again to any American, anywhere, any time, because failure when it comes to an emergency is not an option. When lives are at stake, and this was the worst tragedy in America and lives could have been saved, we need to be honest with ourselves and the American people who pay the bills here, because they expect that type of service, and they should, from their government.

Now, pointing fingers and attributing blame does little to put our country back together. On the other hand, acting Pollyanna, as if everything went according to plan, would be dangerous and foolish. Again, you cannot fix a problem if you do not think you have a problem. My colleagues, we have a problem.

In times of crisis like this, the American people rightfully look to their government. This time, the government at all levels failed them. That is unacceptable. People should and will be held accountable. But today our utmost important task and this body's primary task should be putting the people's lives back together and building communities.

Here are four things I think we can do immediately. First, anyone affected by this tragedy should be exempted from the recently enacted bankruptcy laws immediately. Many have lost everything, including their jobs. Expecting them to honor their obligations would be unrealistic and against the values of this country.

Second, we need to make sure that all the children have universal health care and access to education, and we should provide these children and their families universal health care at least minimally for the next 18 months. We should also consider making community health care part of our emergency response on the part of FEMA, like any first responders. We must also make sure they do not miss a day of school by quickly enrolling them in new schools and providing those schools with the types of services they need.

In addition to that, on education, every individual who is going to get either a GED, college education, postgraduate work, or job training should get a \$3,000 voucher for their education.

IN MEMORY OF SPECIALIST ERNEST DALLAS, JR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, just before we left at the end of July, I received notice from the Department of Defense about the death of one of my constituents, Specialist Ernest Dallas, Jr., in the country of Iraq on July 24. I wanted to take some time this evening to talk about the life of Specialist Ernest Dallas. Many of the remarks that

I am going to make tonight were taken from an article that appeared in the Denton Record Chronicle on July 27, written by Matthew Haag.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is appropriate tonight to honor the memory of Specialist Ernest Dallas. He was from my district, the 26th Congressional District of Texas, and he was serving his country during Iraqi Freedom. Again, he died on July 24 with three other soldiers when a roadside bomb exploded next to their Bradley fighting vehicle. Specialist Dallas was assigned as a scout in the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment in Baghdad. He was 21 years old.

Celebrating and recognizing the life of Specialist Dallas is important. He was a graduate of Fred Moore High School, and he enlisted for a 3-year term in the Army in November of 2003 because he wanted to serve his country and he felt he needed the training that he would be provided to meet his future goals, a future that he hoped included a job as a Denton police officer.

Specialist Dallas was a loving family member and he always took time to phone home to get his family caught up on news of what was going on with their unit. He was the first Denton, Texas, resident to die in the conflict in Iraq.

His first love was baseball, his family said. He started playing when he was 9, and he idolized the former Texas Rangers Catcher Ivan (Pudge) Rodriguez. In 2000, he decided to forgo baseball and enrolled in the Denton Police Department's Citizen Youth Academy. He turned out to have another dream. He wanted to be a Denton policeman, said his stepfather, Manuel Sauseda. In the program, Specialist Dallas would ride along with Denton police officers.

As soon as school let out in the afternoon, Specialist Dallas would race home and get ready to go out with the officers. The program was scheduled from 3 p.m. until midnight when the officers' shift was over. But his stepfather said that Specialist Dallas would frequently call at midnight and ask to stay a little longer, and a little longer frequently turned out to be 6 a.m. in the morning. His mother joked that the neighbors must have grown suspicious of the police cars that were constantly stopping by her house and bringing him home. I know what the neighbors thought: that little boy must be in so much trouble, said his mother, Charlene Sauseda.

Specialist Dallas' family said he always wanted to protect the people he loved. So 2 years after 9/11, he enlisted in the Army. He said that the attacks inspired him to enlist. He saw how it affected everybody, his mother said. Enough was enough, said Ernie. He wanted to go over there and take care of things.

I had the opportunity to sit down with Specialist Dallas' family during the August break and they told me of his love of the Police Academy. They told me how he came to love the Police

Academy. Specialist Dallas was sometime earlier prone to leadership that was taking him in the wrong direction. He was brought home one afternoon by a sheriff's deputy in Denton, a gentleman I know well, named Greg Levling, who now works for the Dallas Sheriff's Department.

Apparently, Specialist Dallas was at that time, at 8 years old, a lookout man for someone who had figured out how to get free pinball games on a pinball machine. Specialist Dallas was to watch and tell if anyone was coming. Well, when the sheriff's deputy came around the corner, Specialist Dallas sang out "Here comes somebody." The sheriff brought him home and his mother said that the sheriff's deputy, Mr. Levling, provided some firm direction for the young man; and it was then and there that he got his love for the police force and his wish to, hopefully, one day serve in the military.

Just a few weeks prior to his death, Specialist Dallas sent an engagement ring to his girlfriend.

He was truly a soldier who understood his duty, and he planned for a future beyond the service to his country.

Mr. Speaker, it was my honor to represent Specialist Dallas. I extend my deepest sympathies to his family. On behalf of the United States Congress, I want his family to know that his service and their sacrifice were deeply appreciated and we thank them.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ARMY SPECIALIST TOCCARA GREEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an American hero. Army Specialist Toccara Green, a native of Rosedale, Maryland, served with the 10th Mountain Division based in Fort Drum, New York. While on mission in Al Asad, Iraq, with her transportation company, she was unfortunately killed by the detonation of a roadside bomb.

Specialist Green was the first woman from Maryland killed in combat in Iraq. What we know with certainty is that she made the ultimate sacrifice in service of her country. The lasting lesson about this tragedy arises in part from the fact that Specialist Green was only 23 years old. Her wonderful and promising life was cut too short by far.

Mr. Speaker, for as long as humanity has walked this earth, we have been forced to deal with the terrible devastation of war.

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This age-old truth brings little comfort, however, when the loss becomes so personal. Knowing this, I offer my deepest condolences to her family during this very difficult time, and I join the entire Maryland Federal delegation in mourning their loss.

Our prayers go out to a very strong and close family, which includes her